



He may have been Dopey but he was the only one who got a look up her skirt.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

BUY IT FOR...

- CHARACTERS YOU CAN CARE ABOUT
- IMMENSELY RICH TABLEAUX THROUGHOUT
- OWNERSHIP OF A SLICE OF HISTORY!

DETAILS

RRP \$39.95 RATING G YEAR 1937

DIRECTOR DAVID HAND

STARRING SNOW WHITE, SEVEN DWARFS, AN EVIL WITCH AND A PRINCE

PICTURE 1.33:1 FULL FRAME

SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1

THE FILM

IT'S DIFFICULT TO WRITE ABOUT THIS DISC WITHOUT GETTING BOGGED DOWN IN HYPERBOLE, well deserved though it is. Without *Snow White*, there would be no Disneyland. No *Lion King* (the best selling video of all time), no Mickey Mouse; hell, come to that, no *Shrek*.

"*Snow White* is the one that started it all," says Chris Carey, senior vice president DVD production. Disney staked his entire career and the future of his studio, on the success of this movie. Realising he needed to diversify his business, despite already having won four Oscars for his animated endeavours, and that only a full length feature would do it, Disney prepared to take the biggest risk of his life.

Inspired by the 1812 Grimm Brothers' fairy tales and a 1916 film version,

Disney chose *Snow White* as the movie that would transform his business.

And transform it, it did, along with the entire film making industry. Until then, cartoons were the preserve of shorts before the main movie event, never lasting longer than about 30 minutes. What Walt Disney wanted to do was make the world's first full length animated movie. The rest of Hollywood saw it as madness and the project quickly became known as 'Disney's Folly,' largely because no-one believed any audience would sit still through such a long cartoon that could possibly destroy their vision!

Few readers will remember this movie as it originally screened. But if you believe several of the animation experts featured in the extensive bonus

materials on these discs, that's actually a good thing. Because, if you buy this DVD, you'll experience the film in a way that not even the original audience were able to. Let us explain.

Snow White is described as the "crown jewel" of the Disney studios. But a jewel over 60 years old must inevitably lose a bit of its lustre. So the original (miraculously surviving) nitrate negatives of the film were taken and a new

restoration master created. In 1993, helped by Kodak division Cinenon, computers took over and digitally cleaned every dirtied frame of the 1937 version. All 118,000 of them. The subsequent advent of high resolution - a technology previously not available - boosted the process dramatically.

DID YOU KNOW?

Disney established its own school for its animators to study and learn human motion and other essential 'special effects' for the movie.



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Following up on Cineon's work, the studio now had a way to take the original high resolution restored files from Cineon and enhance them on computers, then convert them directly into a video signal, totally bypassing film altogether. The outfit could then increase the clarity further, making it look almost as good as the original cels.

Two animators of the original film, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, were invited to inspect and approve the colour correction results and were, apparently, delighted. So, what's the DVD package like, then? Disney and Buena Vista feel that the future of the DVD market rests on children's titles taking a hold. So, professionals that we are, we secured the help of a five-year-old reviewer, Jack, to take a look.

occasionally shows its age; some character design and dialogue, in particular, which struck even our kindy school age co-reviewer as funny. But, as Square has just found out with *Final Fantasy*, to its immense surprise and loss, not even the most technically advanced and ingenious CGI can save a movie if the storyline and atmosphere suck. *Snow White*, however, oozes character and personality; not just the eponymous princess and her diminutive charges, but every creature in their forest home, all wrapped up in the familiar tale of betrayal, and love.

The transfer is excellent, with crisp, vivid images that make the movie look like

it was put in the can six weeks ago, rather than six decades. And the lip synching is spot on.

■ **SOUND:** The soundtrack received similar treatment, removing noise and being cleaned up. Then it went through the 5.1 soundtrack mill, arguably making the sound better than it has ever been.

■ **EXTRAS:** Disc One also has the most kid-friendly bonus materials. An excellent, albeit very challenging, "Dopey's Wild Mine Ride" game is the highlight. There was lots of excitement from Jack when starting this up - you make a series of choices during a roller coaster ride through the mine, *Dragon's Lair* style. A quick tip here - make sure you've watched the feature beforehand, else you'll soon come a cropper when you have to do the matching exercises in the game! This disc also features a sing-a-long of the dwarfs' "Heigh ho!" tune, a tour of the disc from Roy Disney, Walt's nephew, and the much-vaunted, all-new remake of *Some Day My Prince Will Come* by Barbra Streisand.

development, galleries of layouts and backgrounds, with or without narrative, camera and animation.

■ **QUEEN'S DUNGEON:** About the stuff that got chucked. Abandoned Concepts shows ideas thrown out in the film making process, such as an extended dream sequence that, Disney felt, did little to strengthen the storyline and a stupidly over-zealous, faceless prince. 'A bit ugly and scary', according to our child reviewer. Good call here, editor Walt.

■ **DWARFS' MINE:** Deleted scenes, most in money saving projected negative format, introduced by John Canemaker, an animation historian. Most of these are devoid of any colour but are bursting with just as much energy as the full-length feature. Equally rivetting, as far as our kid test subject was concerned.

■ **TRAILER:** Buena Vista believes that Disney video will change the face of the DVD market. If it continues to release discs of this quality, they may just be right. And we should all look as good as this at the ripe, old age of 64!

MAX EVERINGHAM

DISC 1

■ **PICTURE:** Despite being presented in all it's renewed glory, *Snow White*

THE DWARFS' COTTAGE

This bonus section includes video footage of the L.A. world premiere with appearances from Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Shirley Temple, an ancient-looking Mickey and Minnie (the most entertaining element for our six year old reviewer) and a brief glimpse of Walt himself. There's also a captivating radio broadcast of the premiere live from the Carthay Circle Theater and an explanation of the dwarfs' names by Walt Disney from the 1937 Trailer.



DISC 2 - EXTRAS

■ **WISHING WELL:** Includes a text-only version of the original Brothers Grimm story to tab through on the remote control. Good for telling a bedtime story, perhaps, but a bit laborious.

The storyboard-to-film comparisons are particularly good for fans, but bored our five year old, pained by the absence of colour.

■ **QUEEN'S CASTLE:** This is really only for budding artists, presenting as it does insights into the film's visual

IS IT WORTH IT?

On DVD, Walt's masterpiece is better looking than it has been since its original release way back in 1937. Fantastic, fanciful, ageless and disc two is a movie buffs dream.

